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Seafish are about to publish/have published a brand new Guide to Seafood. For some time after its launch, the new seafood guide will only be available as a high quality printed publication from Seafish in Grimsby or Edinburgh. Watch out for news on the launch later this year (2013) to find out how you can purchase your copy.

Qualifications in fish and shellfish

There are new qualifications for managers, supervisors and others in all forms of fish and shellfish businesses, from shellfish companies through to fish and chip shops.

To find out more start here with these information [leaflets](#).

Free videos, free learner workbooks and resources.

These are the kinds of support that Seafish and the Seafood Training Academy will make available to help apprentices and others get the best out of the new fish and shellfish qualifications.

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Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I hope you enjoy the rest of your Seafood Guide.

Lee Cooper
Seafish and the Seafood Training Academy.

Segment Two - The Batter

INTRODUCTION

Good batter is essential to your trade as a fish frier. Poor quality batter could ruin you, so it's important that you know what you're doing. You can either make your own batter or use one of the proprietary brands.



AIMS OF THE SEGMENT

When you come to the end of this segment you'll be able to:

- State the advantages of using proprietary brands of batter;
- Explain how to use proprietary brands;
- Explain how to make batter with plain flour;
- Know the recommended procedure for storing batter;
- Describe the recommended consistency for batter;
- Describe the effect of poor batter on the quality of your product.

PROPRIETARY BRANDS

The biggest advantage of using a pre-mixed batter is that you know, (if you follow the instructions) it will be consistent. Good batter needs the right grades of flour and other ingredients in a correct balance. It should coat the food evenly and fry crisply. Good batter should 'look good' in terms of colour. You'll find that pre-mixed batter helps you achieve all this. Another advantage in using a proprietary brand is that it is quick to use. You can store it in advance too; so you can meet sudden extra demands.

Pre-mixed batters are specially blended not to absorb too much fat - a great advantage.

To the inexperienced fish frier, pre-mixed batter is of considerable help.

Look around at the type of pre-mixed batter on the market.

There is a special batter formula available for cooking frozen fish portions as these give problems when they are fried from frozen.

How to use a Proprietary Brand

Obviously a pre-mixed batter will only work well if you follow the instructions properly. To mix it properly you should:

- Always use **cold water (no more than +15°C)**;
- Add the mixture to the water;
- Stir briskly whilst adding it;
- Make sure it's smooth;
- Allow to stand for at least 30 minutes if possible;
- Keep it cool once it's mixed.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN BATTER

If you decide you'd like to make your own batter, this is how it's done:

First run the cold tap until the water is very cold. To 2.1litres (3¾ pints) of water add a 1.36kg (3lb) bag of plain flour. (Always add the flour to the water.)



Keep stirring it all the time so that the flour remains suspended in the liquid. Aim to make it slightly thicker than you want it. It's easier to add more water than to add flour if you make it too thin.

You should take care that you do not beat your batter too much. Most suppliers recommend a minute to a minute-and-a-half if using an electric mixer. Longer than that and the batter will go flat. It is important to put plenty of air into your batter. Many friers choose to add a raising agent such as baking powder.

WHAT GOOD BATTER SHOULD LOOK LIKE

What is considered to be good batter will change from place to place. Make sure you know what people in your part of the country prefer. But, as a guide, good batter should be thin. Thin batter is not only economical but gives good results. Ideally batter ought to be the consistency of **thin cream** and should slide off a spoon easily.

The Effect of Poor Batter

You want your end product to appeal to your customers. The end product should be properly cooked and nicely presented. Poor quality batter could let you down seriously. If you make the batter too thick, it will be soggy on the inside. You may also prevent the fish from cooking properly. The product will not look crispy and inviting.

STORING BATTER

- The plain flour or pre-mixed bags should be stored in a dry place. (The bags should never be allowed to become damp.)
- Store loose flour in bins with tight-fitting lids.
- Don't leave partly used bags open to the air.
- Once the batter has been mixed, you must keep it cool by storing it in the fridge, if possible. (Mixed batter must never be allowed to become tepid.)
- Don't make more than you need for one frying session. You should not keep batter overnight so mixing too much is wasteful. Batter kept overnight that is used for frying on the following day leads to a darker colouring of batter and quickly loses its crispness.

BATTER SCRAPS

It is worth noting that any unused batter scraps must be stored in a metal container with a lid, outside the main building, prior to disposal. This is because batter scraps are capable of spontaneous combustion.

EXERCISES

Make up a portion of batter and measure its temperature before use. Record its temperature below.

Batter temperature =

Record the temperature of the batter when the batch has almost been used up.²

Batter temperature =

Record the difference between the two temperatures recorded above.

Difference in batter temperatures =

Candidate's signature and date

You have now completed segment two. Time for a well-earned break?

² This is to find out if your batch of batter warms up too much during use.